

Experience Princeton:

A year of revitalization for the business community

Michelle Pirone Lambros, Councilmember, Princeton

“The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second-best time is now.” As local leaders, we must proactively respond to the needs and desires of the communities we serve.

Supporting businesses impacted by the pandemic became a top priority for Princeton as we needed to help our businesses survive this crisis. As we worked through the many challenges, it was evident that there was a disconnect between the municipality and the business community, with no clear mechanism for communication and coordination.

To act on the issues facing local businesses, foster economic development and growth, and enhance the overall community, a steering committee of property, business, and nonprofit leaders was commissioned by Princeton’s Council in 2020 to study various options available to the business community. In 2021, Princeton Council unanimously approved the creation of a Special Improvement District (SID), and Experience Princeton was born.

Information sharing, problem solving

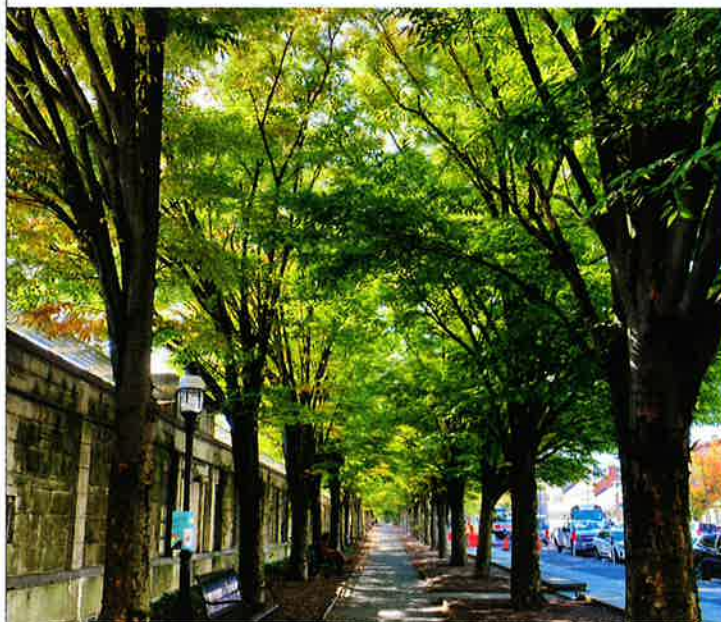
Experience Princeton has been an important conduit for information-sharing and problem-solving, serving as the main connection between the community, businesses, and the town government. With over 792 businesses, Experience Princeton helps ensure that the goals and objectives of the business community align with those of the municipality in a way that benefits our entire town.

Over the past year, Experience Princeton has been working on issues relevant to businesses and the community, such as outdoor dining, trash collection, enhanced wayfinding, and improving the mix of commercial tenants in town. Experience Princeton has also been actively involved in streetscape improvements, which will increase the appeal of the business districts and make the town a more welcoming, navigable, and beautiful place to shop, work and live.

“Princeton is in a unique position to draw a mix of different businesses to the municipality,” said Isaac Kremer, Executive Director of Experience Princeton. “Continuing to coordinate with our business partners and brainstorm new promotions, such as our upcoming Spend Local e-gift card campaign for local businesses, encourages residents



Princeton University Chapel is a gathering place for both the university and Princeton community. The Lessons & Carols program each December draws over 2,000 people.



Allee along Nassau Street on the Princeton University provides a covered walk and gives a chance to connect with nature along the busiest commercial street in Princeton.

Experience Princeton



The Experience Princeton Launch.



The table at Chez Alice provides some Parisian splendor in the heart of Palmer Square. Not to mention the macaroons are among the best you can find anywhere!

to find nearby stores to patronize and can help boost the local economy by creating more traffic to our diverse assortment of businesses.”

Marketing campaigns and promotions that encourage residents to shop locally have helped grow the business ecosystem. During last March’s Restaurant Week, nearly 7,000 meals were sold, generating \$175,000 in sales for our local restaurant partners.

Municipal partnership

Experience Princeton is also working with the town to streamline processes for permits and approvals so that new and growing businesses aren’t unnecessarily delayed and is re-visiting local ordinances to offer more growth opportunities such as outdoor dining and expanding allowable business uses.

“We have forged a strong relationship with the professionals at the

municipality. This enables us to reach out to our businesses to get their input regarding prospective ordinances so that the town understands the potential impact before they finalize any new rules,” adds Experience Princeton’s President Aubrey Haines.

Core programs

Experience Princeton has three core areas of program services, economic development, streetscapes, and marketing, and aims to expand operations in 2024 to include improving parking, increasing plantings, coordinating seasonal and holiday decorations, and growing the digital presence of local businesses via social media, website, and advertising.

As an adaptable and versatile organization, Experience Princeton, with the support of the municipality, continues to deploy initiatives for

Princeton to become a more welcoming town for commerce and improve the overall customer experience for residents and visitors. 🇺🇸

Municipal and SID Successes

Mamoun Chater, third-generation operator of Mamoun’s Falafel—a 50-year-old business with several locations and nearly 10 years in Princeton—has noticed the transformation of the business community in the year that Experience Princeton has been operating.

“[Experience Princeton] has helped us businesses mesh together with the town by projecting the voices of businesses to different town segments like zoning, engineering, and municipal departments. Experience Princeton is the centerpiece, with open communication channels, where problems can be solved. Outdoor dining has been a complicated process, and they are working with the town to simplify the ordinance while working with us to provide materials, keep us updated, and get the outdoor dining process started for us.”



The Special Improvement District business meet up.